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HOME GUARD
INSTRUCTION No. 54, 1942

DRILL

**This Instruction supersedes No. 13,
copies of which should be disposed of.**

(Scale of issue—Section Commanders)

(NOTE—Scale of issue of No. 53 + Platoon Commanders)

Prepared under the direction of

The Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces.

G.H.Q., HOME FORCES,
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HOME GUARD

INSTRUCTION No. 54, DRILL—1942

SECTION I. INSTRUCTIONS FOR DRILLING

General

1. Drill has two uses :—

- i. It is the most efficient method of moving a body of men from one position to another in the desired formation, and of ensuring safety in handling arms.
- ii. It teaches troops instantaneous and instinctive obedience to words of command, and is an encouragement to smartness and pride in the unit.

Close order drill is a prelude to battle drill. Ceremonial drill is *not* required by Home Guard. Slovenly drill is worse than none, so extreme smartness must be enforced on all parades. Noisy stamping of the feet in such movements as turning, coming to attention, or standing at ease is forbidden.

2. Men should not be kept in any position long enough to produce strain or fatigue. Normally, no drill period should exceed 20 minutes.

Words of command

3. Good drill depends in the first instance on good words of command.

4. Commands which consist of one word will be preceded by a caution, which may be part of the word

itself. The first or cautionary part of a word of command will be given deliberately and distinctly: the last or executive part, which, as a rule, should consist of only one word or syllable, will be given sharply: as "PLATOON (slowly)—HALT (sharply)": "RIGHT (slowly)—TURN (sharply)." A pause, which should be uniform in all commands, will be made between the cautionary and the executive word of command.

3. Instructors when giving words of command must stand at attention and themselves adopt a correct bearing, and so be an example of alertness to their men.

6. The words of command laid down for use in close order drill are not intended for use in movements in the field. They are designed with a view to training the man's mind and body to habits of strict obedience to the will of the leader. In movements in the field, words of command will be replaced by short instructions, e.g. "*along this track in single file*"; "*follow me across this bridge*"; "*get under cover of this bank,*" etc.

7. The following table shows when to give words of command to men on the move during close order drill:—

Word of Command (1)	Quick time (2)
Halt	Right foot passing left.
About Turn	Left foot passing right.
Right Turn	Right foot passing left.
Left Turn	Left foot passing right.
For-Ward (when marking time) ..	Left foot being raised.
Mark Time	Left foot passing right.
Halt (when marking time)	(As for forward.)

SECTION II. SQUAD DRILL

General

1. The word Squad in this Instruction is *not* to be confused with the tactical squad referred to in Instruction No. 51, where it consists of one N.C.O. and seven to ten men. Here a squad may be any number of men which can conveniently be managed by one instructor.

2. *Three ranks.* Squad drill will be carried out in three ranks unless numbers are insufficient, when two ranks will be formed.

3. *Distance and interval.* Distance between ranks will be 30 in.; intervals between men will be obtained by dressing with intervals. (See page 5.)

4. *Dressing.* Normally, dressing will be taken up by each man on completion of a movement without word of command.

5. *Taking open and close order.* On the command "Open—order—March," the front rank will take two paces forward, and the rear rank two paces back. On the command "Close—order—March," the action of the front and rear ranks is reversed.

6. *Guides and blank files.* When squads, etc., are turned about, guides and blank files will take three paces forward at the halt, or mark time three paces if on the move. During squad drill in open order, blank files and guides will not alter their positions unless ranks are changed.

7. *On Training.* On training, when the order "Quick—March" is given, the soldier will come to attention and move off with the rifle at the sling (right shoulder).

On the completion of this preliminary movement, the right foot must be flat on the ground and the left heel raised; both knees straight, and the weight of the body, which must be erect, on the right foot.

Two

Bring the left foot smartly up to the right.

Turning to the left—One

As for above, except for **right** read **left**, and vice versa.

Two

Bring the right foot smartly up to the left.

Turning about—One

Keeping both knees straight and the body erect, turn to the right-about on the right heel and left toe, raising the left heel and right toe in doing so, but keeping the right heel firmly on the ground.

On the completion of this preliminary movement the right foot must be flat on the ground and the left heel raised; both knees straight, and the weight of the body, which must be erect, on the right foot.

Two

Bring the left foot smartly up to the right.

Throughout all turns the arms must be kept close to the sides as in the position of attention.

Inclining

Is similar to turning, except that a half turn is made instead of a full turn.

In turning "judging the time" commands are "**Right** (or **Left**)" or "**About—Turn**"; the movements described above will be carried out on the command "**Turn,**" observing the two distinct motions.

Position in marching

1. In marching, the man must be well balanced. In quick time the arms, which should be as straight as their natural bend will allow, should swing naturally from the shoulder, hands reaching as high as the waist belt in front and rear. Hands should be kept closed but not clenched, thumbs always to the front.

2. The legs should be swung forward freely and naturally from the hip joints, each leg as it swings forward being bent sufficiently at the knee to enable the foot to clear the ground. The foot should be carried straight to the front, and, without being drawn back, placed upon the ground with the knee straight, but so as not to jerk the body.

3. Any tendency to turn the toes outwards will be checked.

4. Although several men may be drilled together in a squad with intervals, they must act independently, precisely as if they were being instructed singly. They will thus learn to march in a straight line, and to take a correct pace, both as regards length and time, without reference to the other men of the squad.

5. Before the squad is put in motion the instructor will take care that each man is square to the front and in correct line with the remainder. The man will be taught to take a point straight to his front, by fixing his eyes upon some distant object, and then observing some nearer point in the same straight line. The same procedure will be followed by the man on the named flank or by the named number, when marching in other formations.

Marching in quick time

The quick march

The squad will advance. Quick—March

The squad will step off together with the left foot, in quick time.

The halt

Squad—Halt

A pace of 30 inches will be completed with the left foot and the right foot brought up in line with it. At the same time the right hand will be cut smartly to the side.

Turning when on the march

Right (or Left)—Turn

On the command *Right* (or *Left*)—*Turn* the *left* (or *right*) foot will be brought forward until it is just in front of the *right* (or *left*) foot, and each man will then turn smartly in the required direction, using his *left* (or *right*) foot as a pivot, and advance a full pace of 30 inches in the new direction with the *right* (or *left*) foot.

The turn to the right must be made off the left foot and to the left off the right foot.

About—Turn

Complete the pace with the right foot, then commence the turn with the left foot, the turn being completed in three beats of the time in which the man is marching. Having completed the turn about, the man will at once move forward, the fourth pace being a full one and taken with the right foot.

In the case of a squad with a blank file, marching in line, the blank file will mark time three paces on the word *about*, thus gaining his position in the new front rank before the turn is completed. Guides should act in a similar manner.

Numbering a squad and proving

Numbering

Squad—Number

The squad will number off from the right, the right-hand man calling out *One*, the next on his left *Two*, and so on.

Each man as he calls out his number will keep his head steady and continue to look straight to his front.

Men of the two rear ranks will have the same number as their front rank man.

Proving

If men are ordered to “prove” (i.e. ODD (or EVEN) NUMBERS—PROVE), those so ordered stretch out their right hands to the full extent of the arm, palm to the left, fingers extended and close together, and level with the top of the shoulder.

When parading with rifles at the *order*, the left hand will be stretched out in a similar manner.

As you were

Those proving bring their right (or left) hands smartly to the side, without keeping the elbow too stiff.

Dismissing

Squad—Dis-miss

The squad will turn to the right and, after a pause equal to four paces in quick time, break off quietly and leave the parade ground in quick time.

If arms are carried, they will be sloped before the dismiss, except on wet days, when men may be dismissed at the order.

Marching in file

Turning into file

Move to the Right (or Left) in file. Right (or Left)—Turn

The whole will turn to the right (or left) and lead on in that direction without checking the pace. The men of the rear ranks will dress by their front rank men.

Changing direction by wheeling

Squads or platoons in line should change direction by wheeling.

Changing direction.

Change direction Right (or Left). Right (or Left)—Wheel

The inner man of the leading file will move round a quarter of the circumference of a circle having a radius of four feet, stepping short to enable the outer man of the file to wheel with him. When the quarter circle is completed, the file leads on in the new direction. The other files in succession will follow in the footsteps of the leading file without increasing or diminishing their distances from each other or altering the time.

Mark—Time—rear files cover

If the squad is ordered to mark time, when only a part of it has wheeled into the new direction, the remainder will cover off.

SECTION III. PLATOON DRILL

(See Figs. 1 and 2)

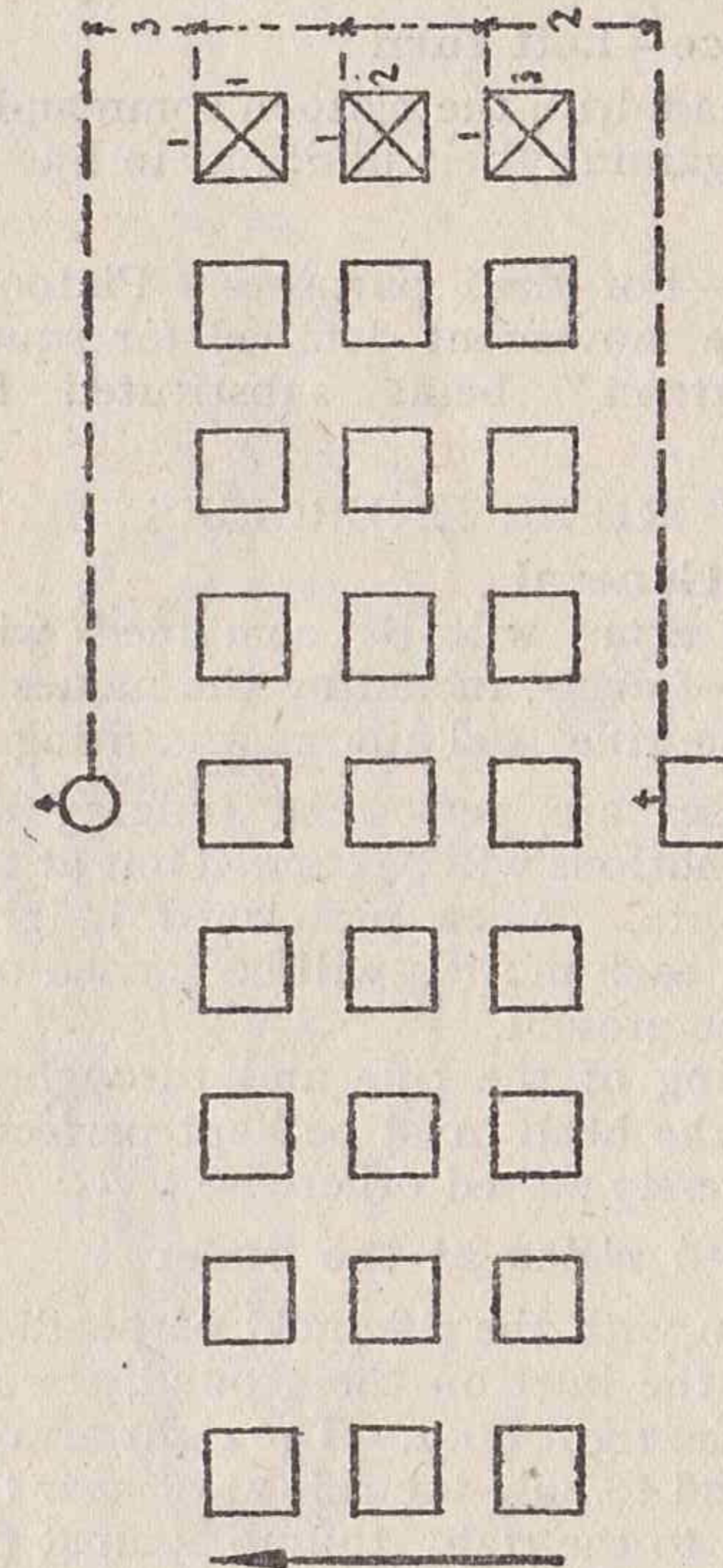
1. A Platoon in line forming column of route

“Move to the right (or left) in column of route”

“Right (or Left) Turn—Quick March”

The platoon commander and the platoon serjeant will move to their positions on the command “Right turn.”

FIG. 1.—Platoon in line in three ranks



Blank files will be in the second file from the left. Ranks will be at arms interval (hand closed).

KEY —  Platoon Commander


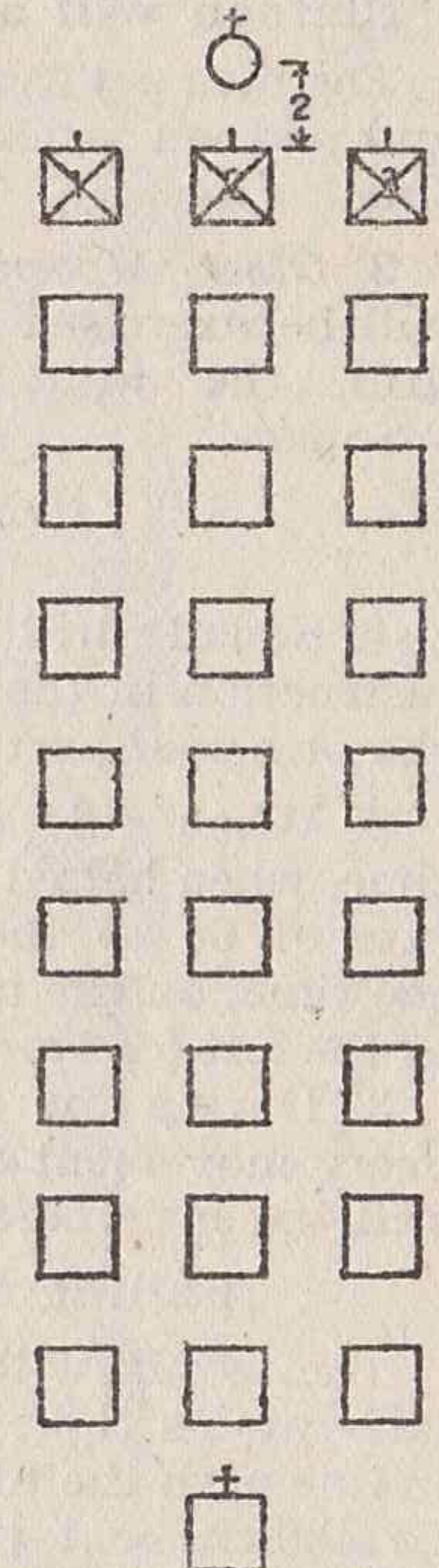
 Platoon Serjeant.

FIG. 2.—Platoon in column of route (threes)



2. *A platoon in column of route forming line*

“Platoon will advance—Left turn”

The men act as in squad drill, the platoon commander and platoon serjeant regaining their positions in line in Quick Time.

3. *Other Movements.*—For drill purposes. Platoons will be exercised in the movement detailed for squad drill, the word “Platoon” being substituted for “Squad.”

SECTION IV. RIFLE EXERCISES

General

1. Squad drill with arms will be combined with instruction in the care of arms, including the names of the principal parts of the rifle, and aiming and firing.

2. When rifle exercises are performed judging the time, when halted, the motions will be carried out at the rate of 60 to the minute. When performed judging the time, on the march, each motion will be carried out as the left foot meets the ground.

3. During the handling of the rifle and throughout every movement of it, the head must be kept perfectly still, except where expressly stated otherwise.

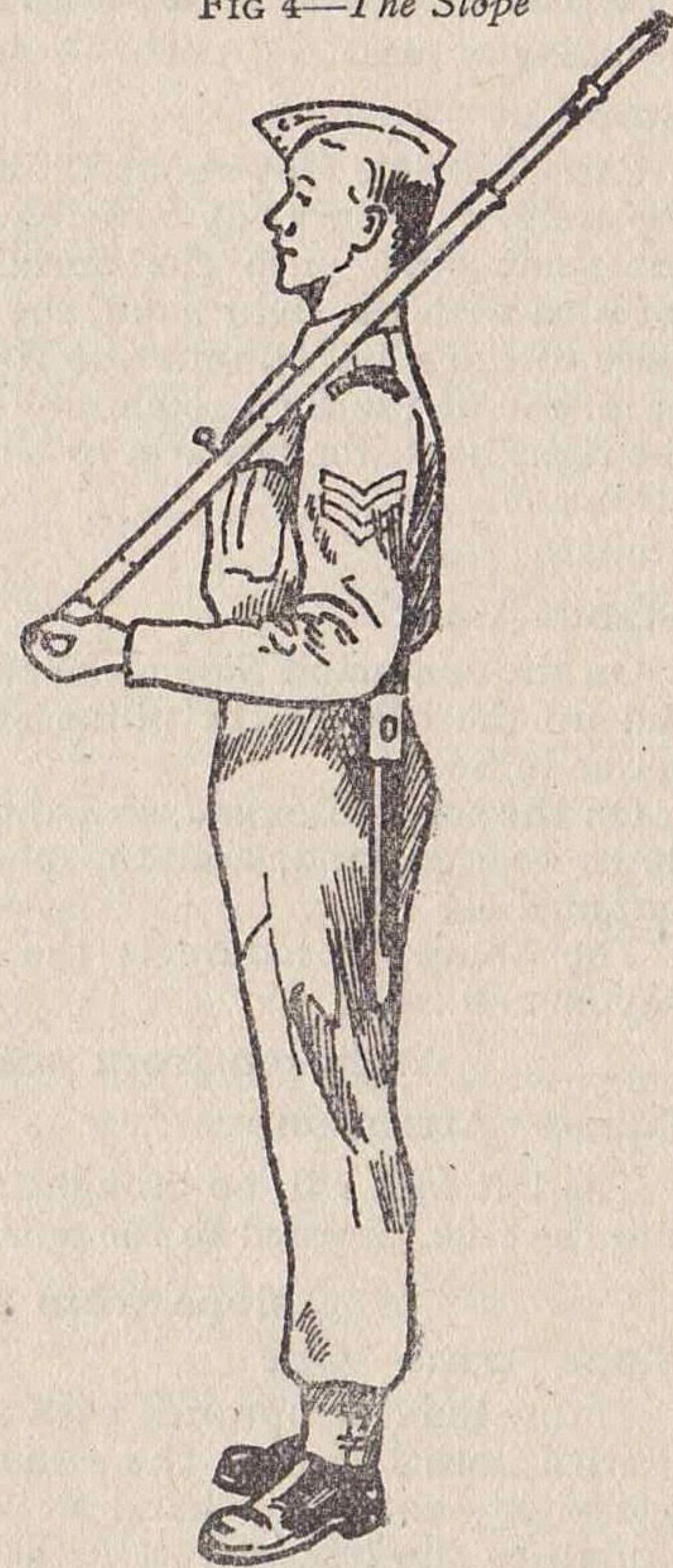
Falling in with rifles at the order

The recruit will fall in with the rifle held perpendicularly at his right side, the butt on the ground, its toe in line with the toe of the right boot. The right arm to be slightly bent, the hand to hold the rifle at or near the band, back of the hand to the right, thumb against the thigh, fingers together and slanting towards the ground, elbow to the rear. (Fig. 3.)

When each man has taken up his dressing, he will stand at ease.

FIG 4—The Slope

FIG. 3—The Order



To stand at ease and stand easy from the order

Standing at ease

Stand at—Ease

Carry the left foot about 12 inches to the left so that the weight of the body rests equally on both feet. At the same time push the muzzle of the rifle smartly forward with the right hand, the right arm straight and close to the side, without allowing the right shoulder to drop, toe of the butt remaining in line with the toe of the right boot, the left arm to be kept in the position of attention.

Standing easy

Stand—Easy

On the command *Stand—Easy*, the right hand will be slid up the rifle to the piling swivel and the men will act as in Sec. II.

On the caution *Squad, etc.*, the right hand will be slid down to the band, and the position of stand at ease assumed.

The above procedure is the same with or without bayonets fixed.

Attention from stand at ease

Squad—Attention

The left foot will be brought smartly up to the right and the rifle returned to the *order*.

The slope from the order

Slope Arms—One

Throw the rifle upwards with the right hand, catching it with both hands at the same time, left hand at the backsight, the right hand at the small of the butt, thumb to the left, elbow to the rear, right arm nearly

straight, rifle kept perpendicular, close into the right side, shoulders to be kept square.

Two

Carry the rifle across the body, and place it flat on the left shoulder, magazine outwards from the body. As the rifle comes on the shoulder seize the butt with the left hand, the first two joints of the fingers grasping the upper side of the butt, the thumb about one inch above the toe, left elbow close to the side, forearm horizontal, and the heel of the butt in line with the centre of the left thigh.

Three

Cut away the right hand to the position of *attention*. Rifle to be kept perfectly still. (Fig. 4.)

The order from the slope

Order Arms—One

Bring the rifle down to the full extent of the left arm, at the same time meeting it with the right hand where it is held at the order, arm close to the body. Butt not to be drawn to the rear.

Two

Bring the rifle to the right side, steadying it at the same time with the left hand at the nose cap, butt just clear of the ground.

Three

Place the butt quietly on the ground, cutting the left hand away to the side.

Fixing and unfixing bayonets

Bayonets will not be fixed as drill movements. They may be fixed for security reasons, the movement being carried out by the men quietly in their own time.

Inspection of arms

Inspection of arms from the order

For Inspection, Port—Arms

Throw the rifle, muzzle leading, with the right hand smartly across the body, magazine to the left and downwards, the barrel crossing opposite the point of the left shoulder, and meet it at the same time with the left hand close behind the backsight, thumb and fingers round the rifle, the left wrist to be opposite the left breast, both elbows close to the body.

Turn the safety catch completely over to the front with the thumb of the right hand. Pull out the cut-off (except with S.M.L.E. Mark III* rifles, which have no cut-off), first pressing it downwards, with the thumb, then seize the knob with the forefinger and thumb of the right hand, and, taking the time from the right-hand man, turn it sharply upwards, and draw back the bolt to its full extent; then seize the butt with the right hand immediately behind the bolt, thumb pointing to the muzzle.

To ease springs, or charge magazines and come to the order.

Ease—Springs

From the position described above, work the bolt rapidly backwards and forwards until all cartridges are removed from the magazine and chamber† allowing them to fall to the ground, then close the cut-off by placing the right hand over the bolt and pressing the cut-off inwards, then close the breech, press the trigger, turn the safety catch over to the rear with the first

† This precaution will also be adopted when magazines are not charged, and at drill it should be presumed that five rounds are in the magazine and chamber.

finger of the right hand, and return the hand to the small, with the forefinger along the outside of the trigger guard and not round the small of the butt.

To order arms from the port

Order Arms—One

Holding the rifle firmly in the left hand, seize it with the right hand where it is held at the order.

Two

As in the second motion of the *order* from the *slope*.

Three

As in the third motion of the *order* from the *slope*.

To slope arms from the port

Slope Arms—One

Place the rifle on the left shoulder as described in the second motion of the *slope* from the *order*.

Two

As in the third motion of the *slope* from the *order*.

Instructions for inspecting arms

When arms are inspected at the *port* only, as in inspecting a platoon on parade, the inspecting officer will see that the exterior of the rifle is clean and free from rust; that the magazine and action are clean and in good order; that the sights are at zero; and that no parts are loose or damaged. He will here and there examine the bore of a rifle to see that it has been cleaned and is free from obstructions.

Each man, when the inspecting officer has passed the file next to him, will, without further word of command, *ease springs, order arms* and *stand at ease*.

To examine arms

Examine—Arms

Both ranks, being at the *port*, will come to the position for loading with the muzzle so inclined as to enable the

inspecting officer to look through the barrel, the thumb-nail of the right hand being placed in front of the bolt to reflect light into the barrel.

The man, when the inspecting officer has passed the next file to him, will act as detailed above.

i. If it is necessary to examine arms, the men, when in the position of *for inspection, port arms*, will be cautioned to remain at the *port*.

ii. In ordering arms from the examine, the first motion will be to seize the rifle with the right hand where it is held at the *order*, at the same time bring the left foot back to the right. With the second motion the rifle will be brought to the right side, the left hand steadying the rifle, as in the second motion of the *order* from the *slope*. The third motion is the same as the third motion of the *order* from the *slope*.

The trail from the order (Fig. 5)

The *trail* is not normally used in close order drill except by rifle and English light infantry regiments. It will be used, however, in the field.

Trail—Arms

By a slight bend of the right arm give the rifle a cant forward and seize it at the point of balance, bringing it at once to a horizontal position at the side at the full extent of the right arm, which should hang easily from the shoulder, fingers and thumb round the rifle.

The order from the trail

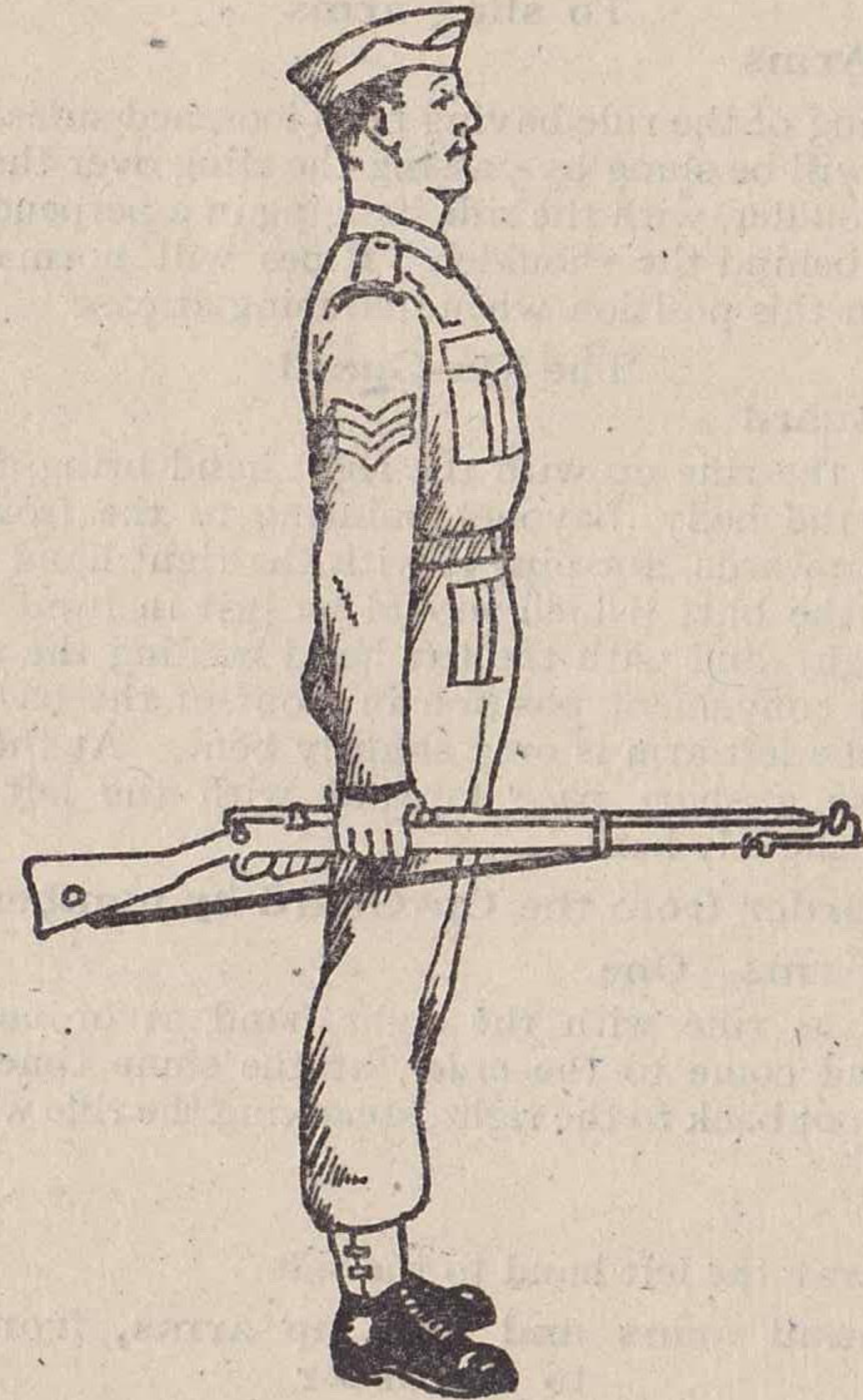
Order—Arms

Raise the muzzle, catch the rifle at the band and come to the *order*.

The short trail

No word of command. Raise the rifle about three inches from the ground, keeping otherwise in the position of the *order*.

FIG. 5—The Trail



If standing with ordered arms and directed to close to the right or left, to step back, or to take any named number of paces, men will come to the *short trail*.

To sling arms

Sling—Arms

The sling of the rifle having been loosened sufficiently, the rifle will be slung by passing the sling over the right or left shoulder, with the rifle hanging in a perpendicular position behind the shoulder. Rifles will normally be carried in this position when marching at ease.

The On-Guard

1. On-Guard

Throw the rifle up with the right hand bringing it in front of the body, bayonet pointing to the front and slightly upwards, grasping it with the right hand at the small of the butt (which should be just in front of the right thigh), and with the left hand holding the rifle in the most convenient position in front of the backsight so that the left arm is only slightly bent. At the same time take a short pace forward with the left foot; left knee slightly bent.

2. The order from the On-Guard by numbers

Order Arms—One

Seize the rifle with the right hand at or near the band, and come to the *order*, at the same time bring the left foot back to the right, steadying the rifle with the left hand.

Two

Cut away the left hand to the side.

To ground arms and take up arms, from and to the order

Men will learn to ground arms quietly in their own time and not as drill movements.



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